

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00  
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
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O R 181541Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2917  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, XF, PLO  
SUBJECT: PNC: MARCH 17

REF: CAIRO 4615 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PALESTINIANS DELIGHTED WITH PRESIDENT'S CLINTON  
STATEMENT, AND ARAFAT ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE QUOTED AS SAYING HE  
"VERY OPTIMISTIC". NEVERTHELESS, WE DOUBT NEW USG SUPPORT FOR A  
PALESTINIAN HOMELAND WILL BE REFLECTED IN PNC COMMUNIQUE, SNCE  
DELEGATES UNLIKELY INTERPRET SPEECH AS SINGALING CHANGE IN USG  
ATTITUDE TOWARD PLO AS AN ORGANIZATION. PNC PLENARY ADJOURNED  
WHILE COMMITTEES DRAFT REPORTS. END SUMMARY  
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1. MAIN EVENT OF MARCH 17 PNC (CLOSED) SESSION WAS FOUR HOUR  
PRESENTATION BY ARAFAT, IN WHICH HE REPLIED TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS,  
BOTH WRITTEN AND ORAL, WHICH HAD BEEN PUT TO HIM DURING PREVIOUS  
SESSIONS. EARLY IN DAY, DOMINATN MODD IN ASSEMBLY HALL WAS STILL  
DISTRESS AT JUMBLATT ASSASSINATION, AND ARAFAT'S EARLIERREMARKS,  
AS REORTED TO US, SEEMED TO REFLECT WIDE SUSPICION THAT USG

WAS IN SOME WAY INVOLVED IN MURDER (RATONALE BEING THAT IT IS US AND ISRAEL WHICH SEEK REIGNITE INTER-ARAB FIGHTING, JUST AS US AND ISRAEL WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE FAVORED LEBANESE CIVIL WAR AS WAY OF DIVIDING THE ARABS). A SAMPLE OF ARAFAT'S EARLIER REMARKS, AS REPORTED TO US BY WESTERN JOURNALIST, INCLUDED SUCH OLD CANARD AS FAISAL ASSASSINATION ARRANGED BY CIA BECAUSE OF HIS INSISTENCE THAT JERUSLAEM BE RETURNED TO ARABS.

2. WHEN NEWS OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S CLINTON REMARKS ON MIDDLE EAST REACHED COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOWEVER, ARAFAT REPORTEDLY SHIFTED GEARS, WELCOMING PRESIDENT'S REMARKS.

3. IN INTERVIEW WITH CORRESPONDENTS AFTER SESSION, ARAFAT SAID PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARK ON PALESTINIAN HOMELAND HAS GIVEN HIM GREAT HOPE AND "WE HOPE HE MEANS IT." ARAFAT SAID HE WAS VERY OPTIMISTIC--PRESEINT HAS "PUT HIS HAND ON HEART OF PROBLEM."

4. GOE'S VIEW OF ARAFAT'S ANTI-AMERICAN RANTING IS REFLECTED IN FACT THAT NEWSPAPERS MAKE NO REFERENCE TO THEM, REPORTING ONLY THAT PNC PSPOKESMAN TOLD PRESS ARAFAT WELCOMED PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARKS: "WE WELCOME THIS NEW ATTITUDE BY US. WE HOPE THIS STATEMENT WILL BE PRACTICALLY TRANSLATED INTO FACT."

5. ON MORNING MARCH 18 PLENARY ADJOURNED UNTIL COMMITTEES FINISH THEIR WORK, BUT WILL BE RECONVENED PERHAPS STAURDAY TO HEAR COMMITTEE REPORTS. INTEREST IN COMPOSITION OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE HAS DISSIPATED SINCE MEBERSHIP HAS NOT BEEN NUMERICALLY LIMITED. AT LAST COUNT 100 MEMBERS OF PNC HAVE JOINED THIS ONE COMMITTEE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A SPECIAL COMMITTEE, INCLUDING SIX REPS OF "RESISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS" AND NINE "INDPENDENTS" ARE DRAFTING THE FINAL POLITICAL STATEMENT OF THE PNC, WHICH WILL BE BASED ON THE EXCOMM REPORT DEBATED FOR THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS.

6. COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: SA'D AD-DIN AL-GHANDUR (FINANCE), BRIG. GEN MUHAMMAD ASH-SHA'IR (MILITARY), 'ABDALL AL-HURANI (INFORMATION AND CULTURE), 'ABD AL-'AZIZ SAQR (NATIONAL UNITY), JAMAL AS-SURANI (LEGAL), DR. FADIL ZAYDAN (EDUCATION), MUSTAFA MILHIM (OCCUPIED HOMELAND), INTISAR AL-WAZIR (SOCIAL AFFIARS), AND YAHJA SALAH (POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS). SPECIAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE INCLUDES QADDUMI AND YSAIR 'ABD RABBUH.

7. WITH REJECTIONISTS CONTINUING MAKE OUTSPOKEN CRITICISM OF EXCOMM LEADERSHIP AND MODERATE TACTICS AND STRATEGY, MARCH 17 SESSION WAS AS WILD AND WOOLLY AS THOSE BEFORE WITH ARAFAT JUMPING TO GRAB THE MICROPHONE AND RESPOND IN SAME ANGRY AND TOUGH FASHION AS CRITICS POSED THEIR COMMENTS. NEVERTHELESS, PREDICTION IS THAT REJECTIONISTS WILL

SUBSCRIBE TO FINAL POLITICAL DECLARATION. ARAFAT EACH DAY PROVES THAT HIS CONTROL OF FATAH IS VIRTUALLY UNCHALLENGEABLE. FOR EXAMPLE, CONSENSUS IS THAT FINAL COMMUNIQUE WILL EXPLICITLY APPROVE CONTINUING CONTACTS WITH JORDAN. PFLP WITH ONLY 12 VOTES (PFLP/GC HAS ONLY 9) IS IN WEAK VOTING POSITION IF IT CAN NOT DEPEND ON FATAH REJECTIONIST WING.

8. COMMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON PNC DELS OF CLINTON REMARKS WAS REPORTEDLY PROFOUND. MANY MODERATES, ALREADY DISHEARTENED BY PRESIDENT'S MARCH 9 PRESS CONFERENCE, HAD BEEN DISMAYED BY PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT BY MODERATE FAYIZ SAYIGH OF US INTENTIONS (REFTEL). BEING BOTH MODERATE AND SUPPOSED US EXPERT, SAYIGH'S REMARKS

HAD FAR MORE IMPACT THAN REJECTIONISTS' RANTING. IN NEXT SESSION, HOWEVER, TICKERS ON PRESIDENT'S SPEECH BEGAN CIRCULATE, AND KNOTS OF READERS PORED OVER THEM. NET EFFECT, IN WORDS ONE US JOURNALIST, WAS THAT MODERATES BECAME "PUNCH DRUNK". EVIDENCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT PLO ANALYSTS STILL REELING IS THAT VOICE OF PALESTINE FROM CAIRO HAS NOT YET COMMITMENTED ON SPEKH.

9. MODERATE PALESTINIANS UNDOUBTEDLY DELIGHTED WITH PRESIDENT'S REFERENCE TO HOMELAND, AS ARAFAT'S ON THE RECORD REMARKS ATTEST. HOWEVER, SINCE WE DOUBT PNC DELEGATES SEE SPEECH AS SIGNALLING ANY CHANGE IN USG ATTITUDE TOWARD PLO AS AN ORGANIZATION, IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT FINAL COMMUNIQUE WILL REFLECT PUBLIC WELCOME ENUNCIATED BY ARAFAT AND OTHERS.

10. WE DO, HOWEVER, CONTINUE EXPECT MORE EMPHASIS ON UTILITY "INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES" (CAIRO 4433) AND LESS TRESS ON SECOND SENTENCE OF FIRST POINT OF 1974 (COUNCIL REFUSES HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ... (RES. 242) AT ANY LEVEL, ARAB OR INTERNATIONAL, INCLUDING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE). WE ARE ALSO HEARING, HOWEVER, THAT PALESTINAIANS (EVEN BYZANTINE) ARE SPECULATING ON WHY PRESIDENT HIGHLIGHTED PLIGHT OF "REFUGEES", PRESUMABLY FEARING THAT SINCE PLO REJECTS 242 BECAUSE OF REFERENCE TO PALESTINIANS SOLELY IN THIS REFUGEE CONTEXT, USG PERHAPS INTENDS APPROACH PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WITHOUT REFERENCE TO PLO. MATTHEWS

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## Message Attributes

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